

Approved as Amended: 1/30/02

**CITY OF MORGAN HILL
JOINT SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL,
SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION AND
SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING
MINUTES - JANUARY 15, 2002**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kennedy called the special meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

City Council

Present: Council Members Carr, Chang, Sellers, Tate and Mayor Kennedy

Planning Commission

Present: Commissioners Acevedo, Benich, Lyle, Mueller, Weston and Chair Sullivan

Absent: Commissioner McMahon

Architectural Review Board

Present: Board Members Martin, Pyle and Chair Fruit

Absent: Board Members Kennett and Simon

DECLARATION OF POSTING OF AGENDA

City Clerk Torrez certified that the meeting's agenda was duly noticed and posted in accordance with Government Code 54954.2.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Kennedy opened the floor to comments for items not appearing on this evening's agenda. No comments were offered.

WORKSHOP

1. DESIGN REVIEW ORDINANCE, ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW HANDBOOK AND GATEWAY GUIDELINES

Director of Community Development Bischoff presented the staff report. He indicated that his department's work plan includes the update of the Architectural Review Handbook (developed in 1989 and has not been updated since), and the Design Review Ordinance (adopted in 1980 with minor revisions over the years). He said that it is time to reexamine these documents as the City has completed the General Plan update. In the General Plan process, discussion was undertaken as to

what the city is and what it should be. Given the age of the documents, it was not known whether they still represent the community's values. He indicated that the City Council recently established an Architectural Review Board (ARB) and that the ARB is working with documents inherited. Staff felt that it would be appropriate for the ARB to have a hands on role in updating both documents.

Mr. Bischoff stated that the firm of RRM Design Group was hired to assist the City in the update process and that in attendance were Jami Williamson and Debbie Rudd from said firm. He stated that the purpose of tonight's meeting was to identify key issues and opportunities to further enhance the community and identify what the City would like to incorporate into the documents to help it in this regard. It is proposed to take the information presented this evening and establish a direction for the Design Review Handbook and the ordinance. Once the process has begun and staff believes that it has captured the essence of changes, staff would report back to the Council to see if staff accurately interpreted the Council's direction with regards to these documents. Following input from the City Council, staff would work with the consultants and the ARB in drafting amendments to the Design Review Ordinance and the Design Handbook. He indicated that staff intends to conduct another workshop with the City Council to allow Council review of the documents and validate the direction or advise where changes need to be made. Once the data is collected, staff would finalize the documents and take them before hearings to the Planning Commission and the City Council. He stated that he expects the process to take three to four months, with a hearing process to be held in April or May.

Mr. Bischoff indicated that the group would be looking at design topics this evening. Also, to be discussed are gateway areas and whether they should be handled similarly to other areas in the city or should they receive special attention. He informed the group that the city currently has two applications for projects within gateways, one located at Cochrane and Monterey and one proposed on Cochrane Road, west of the Freeway. He said that it was important, in discussions, to steer clear of any specific project. If focus is to be given to gateway areas, the group should focus on ones that are not involved with current applications.

Ms. Rudd and Ms. Williamson presented a slide show of design guidelines from other cities. It was indicated that based on the information gathered this evening, the information would be used to develop what is important to the group in the development of guidelines and standards (stringent/flexible). It was indicated that the photographs taken were identified as "likes" and "dislikes" with identifying statements. These were consolidated into six categories: Landscaping and Parking, Residential, Architectural Elements, Commercial, Office, and Industrial. It was indicated that the information gathered would be used as a foundation for the documents to be drafted.

The City Council, Planning Commission, and ARB were divided into groups and conducted an exercise to identify issues and highest priorities based on the photos displayed.

The following additional comments were offered aside from the six categories:

Mayor Kennedy felt that the downtown is a special case. He recommended that the older buildings/styles be retained, noting that focus was given to new buildings/architecture.

Commissioner Lyle noted that there were different rules for downtown areas versus the rest of the community.

Commissioner Sullivan stated that there was discussion regarding mixed uses in the downtown. Even though "mixed use" is still experimental, the City is convinced that it would work. She felt that mixed use development would be a positive thing in the downtown but did not believe that it would be sustainable in other areas of town.

Board Member Fruit felt that a downtown district should be established with tight guidelines that are specific to the downtown (sensitive area).

Commissioner Benich did not believe that large setbacks are needed in the downtown area.

Commissioner Mueller would like to see medians on arterials landscaped versus the use of rock, boulders and/or concrete. He discouraged the use of attached sidewalks in residential neighborhoods. (It was felt that detached sidewalks give a much better residential feel and was noted that street standards do not allow detached sidewalks).

Commissioner Weston and Mayor Kennedy stated that they would like to see flexibility in design and less flexibility in landscape.

Council Member Tate felt that once flexibility is given, a builder would try to keep costs low if allowed flexibility.

Commissioner Mueller said that he would like to see the standards set high because if they are not set high, the City would not see high standards.

Commissioner Lyle stated that should standards be set high for residential areas, it may impact affordable housing.

Commissioner Sullivan stated that the City could be very proscriptive in terms of what it wants (variety of articulation with flexibility). She felt that the city can provide flexibility in design without everyone coming in with a request for waivers.

Commissioner Mueller felt that the group is more interested in the performance outcome.

Mayor Kennedy said that the group desires quality results but that it does not want to be rigid and proscriptive in its review of design.

Ms. Rudd stated that the ordinance can identify the minimum design standards required. The guidelines can provide examples of how design standards can be achieved by examples and photographs. She indicated that individuals want to develop in Morgan Hill and felt that the City has the opportunity to state that it wants quality design.

Council Member Sellers said that some cities have exceedingly high bars. He stated that this community does not have the historical or architectural context as that of other cities but that it is known that a high standard is desired. He felt that industrial parks could afford variations and that, to some degree, the owners want to make a statement as to who they are. He felt that industrial buildings can have flexibility but commercial designs should be stringent in terms of architectural design, landscaping and signage (no franchise architecture) in order to avoid strip commercials that provide minimum design standards, do not integrate signage and are not creative in terms of architecture/landscaping.

Commissioner Sullivan stated that high architectural design for residential development is achieved through the Measure P competition.

Mayor Kennedy felt that the City's residential design is in good shape.

Commissioner Mueller felt that the lack of detached sidewalks is lost in residential developments. He also felt that a lot of the entry statements that help set neighborhoods off have been lost in some of the newer projects.

Commissioner Sullivan felt that public amenities in residential sections can have the bar raised a little. She recommended flexibility in terms of structures.

Commissioner Lyle said that a lot of people do not like the fact that a number of neighborhoods have prominent garages (e.g., garages too close together, too near the street, dominate the street, etc.). He indicated that changes to Measure P have been made to discourage this and to encourage front porches.

Commissioner Sullivan noted that porches, in general, seem to be an interesting idea in residential and commercial areas. She recommended that porches be included in the design where food is served/eaten outside.

Commissioner Weston noted that the City does not have control of individual residences or remodels.

Commissioner Sullivan noted that secondary buildings, sheds and mini garages are being abutted next to fences.

Commissioner Benich noted that the architectural elements contained examples of public art. He indicated that the City's General Plan has a specific goal of fostering/encouraging the use of public art in non residential areas.

Commissioner Sullivan noted that the City has some huge homes on relatively small lots. She felt that these homes deserve appropriately sized lots. Council Member Tate concurred with this concern.

Council Member Chang recommended the use of a floor area ratio in terms of homes/lot sizes.

Ms. Rudd noted that the General Plan identifies the City's gateway areas. She asked if these areas should be given special attention or should they be given the same guidelines as other areas?

Mayor Pro Tempore Carr stated that during the General Plan update, there was great discussion about gateways. The task force wanted to make a statement that when individuals were driving in from the south or from the north, they know that they are entering Morgan Hill, a distinct community.

Action: *It was the consensus of the group that gateway areas be given special attention as it relates to landscaping, architecture, and signage and to some degree, lot size transition.*

Commissioner Sullivan felt that the freeway exits may be more difficult because there is a tendency to place shopping centers on these freeway entrances. She felt that gateway areas deserve their own design committee.

Commissioner Lyle did not want to see another development to what has occurred at Dunne and Highway 101 (e.g., franchise architecture, massive parking lots, awful signs, sign clutter, utility signal boxes, etc.).

Commissioner Weston recommended that monument signs be unified.

Council Member Chang expressed concern with freeway signs and indicated that she did not want to see duplication of the large signs.

Commissioner Lyle indicated that the train station could be another potential entryway.

Commissioner Sullivan recommended grove of oak trees be planted around monument signs (entryway moment).

Commissioner Mueller recommended that the Watsonville/Santa Teresa and Hale/Tilton areas be designated as entryways into the City.

Mayor Pro Tempore Carr felt that the manner in which signage is lit is important, especially in gateway areas (lights should not be glaring/glowing).

Commissioner Sullivan recommended that the City be specific in terms of lighting (e.g., car lots).

Ms. Rudd indicated that she would take the information back and summerize it. She would return with additional information and a defined direction of where the group wants to go.

Commissioner Sullivan requested samples of four or five pages from other cities that would provide sample verbiage. Having samples would assist the group with word crafting.

Commissioner Mueller felt that it would be helpful to have the development community's buy in early in the process instead of providing them with something at the end of the process. He felt that the development community could provide input that would help the process along.

Director of Community Development Bischoff said that the development community would have an opportunity to comment in the public hearing process. He indicated that draft documents could be provided to the development community, once completed. He said that a separate meeting could be held with the ARB and the development community to see what type of input they would be able to provide.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Kennedy adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

MINUTES RECORDED AND PREPARED BY:

Irma Torrez, City Clerk